

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

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Claim 1 (original): A communications method, comprising:

- detecting when a call to a telephone number goes unanswered;
- determining if the unanswered call is from a member of a group identified in a stored set of information associated with the called telephone number;
- and
- when it is determined that the calling party is a member of the group identified in said stored set of information:
- presenting the calling party with a list of other members of said group who have provided telephone numbers for contact purposes;
- receiving information from the calling party identifying one or more members of the group who are to be included in a conference call; and
- initiating a conference call to any group members identified by the received information.

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Claim 2 (original): The method of claim 1, wherein the step of initiating a conference call includes placing calls to at least two group members using telephone numbers corresponding to said two group members obtained from said stored set of information.

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Claim 3 (original): The method of claim 2, further comprising:

- connecting said unanswered call to a telephone switch peripheral device when it is determined that the unanswered call is from a member of the group identified in the stored set of information; and

5 wherein the step of presenting the calling party with a list of other
6 members of said group includes operating said peripheral device to play a
7 message to said calling party including the names of other members of said
8 group who have provided telephone numbers.

1 Claim 4 (original): The method of claim 3, further comprising the step of playing
2 messages from multiple members of said group to the calling party prior to initiating
3 said conference call.

1 Claim 5 (original): The method of claim 4,
2 wherein said step of initiating a conference call includes operating said
3 peripheral device to initiate calls to any group member identified by the
4 received information.

1 Claim 6 (original): The method of claim 5, further comprising:
2 detecting when a call initiated to a group member identified by the
3 received information is answered; and
4 bridging the answered call with the call from the calling party.

1 Claim 7 (original): The method of claim 2, wherein the step of determining if the
2 unanswered call is from a member of a group identified in said stored set of
3 information associated with the called telephone number includes:
4 comparing a calling party telephone number obtained using automatic
5 number identification information to a list of telephone numbers corresponding to the
6 members of said group.

1 Claim 8 (original): The method of claim 2,

2 wherein the step of detecting when a call to a telephone number
3 goes unanswered includes operating a telephone switch to provide call termination
4 information to a service control point; and

5 wherein the step of determining if the unanswered call is from a
6 member of a group identified in said stored set of information associated with the
7 called telephone number includes:

8 operating the service control point to compare a number obtained from
9 the calling party to a list of identification numbers corresponding to the members of
10 said group.

1 Claim 9 (original): The method of claim 1, further comprising the step of:

2 maintaining said set of stored information in a location accessible to a
3 telephone switch peripheral device;

4 operating said telephone switch peripheral device to receive
5 information updating said stored information;

6 generating an E-mail message including at least some of the received
7 information used to update said stored information; and

8 transmitting the generated E-mail message to at least one member of
9 said group.

1 Claim 10 (original): The method of claim 9,

2 wherein said step of operating said telephone switch peripheral device
3 to receive information includes operating said telephone switch peripheral device to
4 receive a call from a member of said group.

1 Claim 11 (original): The method of claim 10,

2 wherein said received information includes a spoken message; and
3 wherein the step of generating an E-mail message includes:

- 4 i) performing a speech recognition operation on the spoken message;
5 and
6 ii) incorporating at least some text generated by said speech
7 recognition operation into said E-mail message.

1 Claim 12 (original): The method of claim 9,
2 wherein said step of operating said telephone switch peripheral device
3 to receive information includes operating said telephone switch to receive an
4 emergency contact telephone number corresponding to a member of said group via
5 the Internet.

1 Claim 13 (original): The method of claim 12, wherein the step of generating an E-
2 mail message includes:
3 incorporating the received emergency contact telephone number into
4 said E-mail message.

1 Claim 14 (currently amended): A communications system, comprising:
2 a telephone switch for receiving calls directed to a subscriber
3 telephone number;
4 a peripheral device coupled to said switch including:
5 i. circuitry for accessing a set of information corresponding to
6 the subscriber telephone number, the set of information including a list
7 of telephone numbers corresponding to a group of individuals
8 associated with said subscriber telephone number;
9 ii. circuitry for playing a message to a calling party who made
10 an unanswered call to the subscriber telephone number, the message
11 including the names of the group members who have included contact
12 telephone numbers in said set of information;

13 iii. call conferencing circuitry coupled to said telephone switch
14 for placing calls to members of said group selected by the calling party
15 and for bridging said calls to the call placed by the calling party to the
16 subscriber telephone number when said calls are answered; and
17 a service control point coupled to said telephone switch including
18 control logic for instructing said switch to connect an unanswered call directed to said
19 subscriber telephone number to said peripheral device in response to receiving call
20 completion status information indicating that the call has gone unanswered.

1 Claim 15 (original): The system of claim 14, further comprising:

2 means for allowing a member of said group to update an emergency
3 contact telephone number via the Internet; and

4 means for generating an E-mail message notifying at least one member
5 of the group when an emergency contact telephone number is updated.

1 Claim 16 (original): The system of claim 14, wherein the peripheral device further
2 comprises:

3 means for receiving a call from a member of said group seeking to
4 update an emergency contact telephone number stored in said set of information; and

5 means for generating an E-mail message notifying at least one member
6 of the group when an emergency contact telephone number is updated by a received
7 telephone call.

1 Claim 17 (original): The system of claim 14,

2 wherein said set of information is stored in said peripheral device; and

3 wherein a duplicate copy of at least some information in said set of
4 information is stored in the service control point.

1 Claim 18 (currently amended): A communications method comprising:

2 storing a set of information including a list of members of a group
3 associated with a telephone number who may be contacted when a call to said
4 telephone number goes unanswered, the set of information including for each group
5 member who may be contacted, a contact telephone number;

6 detecting, based on the failure to receive an answer to the call, when a
7 call to the telephone number associated with said group goes unanswered;

8 presenting the calling party placing the unanswered call with a list of
9 group members who have contact telephone numbers stored in said set of
10 information;

11 receiving information from the calling party indicating the group
12 member or members who the calling party would like to contact; and

13 initiating a conference call using at least one contact telephone number
14 obtained from the set of stored information corresponding to a group member
15 indicated by the received information.

1 Claim 19 (original): The method of claim 18, further comprising the step of:

2 providing the calling party with stored messages corresponding to at
3 least some of group members who have contact telephone numbers stored in said set
4 of information.

1 Claim 20 (original): The method of claim 18, wherein the step of initiating a
2 conference call includes the steps of:

3 placing separate calls to at least two members of said group using
4 contact telephone numbers obtained from the set of stored information;

5 detecting when a placed call is answered; and

6 bridging each answered placed call with the call from the calling party
7 to establish a conference call.

1 Claim 21 (currently amended): A digital storage medium, comprising:

2 a first set of stored information for providing a communications
3 service, the set of stored information including:

4 i) call process instructions responsive to ~~an indication~~ a call
5 completion status indicator signal indicating of a non-answered call status,

6 ii) a primary telephone number associated with a first
7 communications service subscriber;

8 iii) a list of group members associated with said primary
9 telephone number, and

10 iv) for each of a plurality of members in said list:

11 a) a telephone number from which the group
12 member may call said primary telephone; and

13 b) a telephone number which can
14 be used to contact said group member.

1 Claim 22 (original): The digital storage medium of claim 21, wherein the first set of
2 stored information further comprises, for each of said plurality of members in said
3 list:

4 an E-mail address associated with the group member.

1 Claim 23 (original): The digital storage medium of claim 22, wherein the first set of
2 stored information further comprises, for each of said plurality of members in said
3 list:

4 a message provided by said group member.

1 Claim 24 (original): The digital storage medium of claim 22, wherein the first set of
2 stored information further comprises, for each of said plurality of members in said
3 list:

4 an E-mail notification indicator used to indicate if said group member
5 wants E-mail notification when a change is made to one or more pieces of
6 information included in said first set of stored information.

1 Claim 25 (original): The digital storage medium of claim 24,
2 wherein the first set of stored information further comprises, for each
3 of said plurality of members in said list:
4 a personal identification number.

1 Claim 26 (original): The digital storage medium of claim 23, further comprising:
2 a second set of stored information for providing a
3 communications service, the second set of stored information including:
4 i) a second primary telephone number associated with a second
5 communications service subscriber; and
6 ii) a second list of group members associated with said primary
7 telephone number,
8 iii) for each of a plurality of members in said second list:
9 a) a telephone number from which the group
10 member may call said second primary telephone; and
11 b) a second telephone number which can be
12 used to contact said group member.